Assistant Directors Responsibilities

By Frank Tardibuono

Assistant Directors, or ADs, are responsible for many things on set. Many people refer to them as the lifeblood of production. There are several ADs on set and their responsibilities vary from rank. 1st AD is the head honcho. They are the acting director while shooting. They worked through pre-production with the producer and director. They give all of the paperwork to 2nd AD once production actually starts. All of the AD’s are liable for anything that happens on set. This would explain why most of them look hostile. They don’t want someone getting injured and it landing on their head. Usually the 2nd AD, but gets shifted to PAs a lot, signs in and out the cast & crew every day. The 3rd AD and team of PAs are incharge of the background actors. They are incharge of placement of the actors, and any questions or concerns you might have. Whoever is paired with the background is also incharge of making sure to bring back the BG actors that they like on set. The ADs are the voice of the set. If you need to hear anything from a higher up or that we are “ROLLING!” it comes from the ADs. They also report everything that is going on to the higher up director and producers. I believe that ADs are one of the most important rolls on set. They keep everything going on time and make it happen right. This industry seems to be a lot of not wanting to talk to people below you, so ADs and PAs are used for everything. I would like to end as a producer, but I could see myself being an AD for awhile.